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Chairman: Mr. Galuška ..... (Czech Republic)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

Agenda item 116: Human rights questions (*continued*)

(b) Human rights questions, including alternative approaches for improving the effective enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms (*continued*) (A/C.3/54/L.61, L.67, L.70, L.72, L.73, L.74, L.75, L.77 and L.79)

(c) Human rights situations and reports of special rapporteurs and representatives (*continued*) (A/C.3/54/L.60, L.63, L.76, L.80 and L.81)

Draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.67: Protection of migrants

1. **Ms. Diaz-Ceballos** (Mexico) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the original sponsors and Algeria.

Draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.70: Human rights and terrorism

2. **Mr. Bilman** (Turkey), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the original sponsors and Cuba, Malaysia and the Philippines, said that the sponsors had agreed to orally revise the text and delete paragraph 7. Terrorism remained one of the main obstacles to the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms and, therefore, to the aspirations that underpinned the work of the Third Committee in seeking to create an environment promoting the enjoyment of human rights. The first draft resolution introduced by Turkey and others on that subject, adopted by consensus as General Assembly resolution 48/122, had been inspired by the principles of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the Vienna Declaration.

3. The Universal Declaration on Human Rights affirmed that everyone had the right to life, liberty and security of person, while the Vienna Declaration condemned terrorism as an activity aimed at the destruction of human rights, fundamental freedoms and democracy. The authors of the former had been far-sighted in anticipating the emerging threat to human rights from groups, individuals and even States. The idea that terrorism violated human rights had gained currency, as reflected in several other resolutions and declarations adopted by consensus in a number of forums.

4. The sponsors welcomed the preliminary report of the Special Rapporteur on human rights and terrorism (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1999/27), which stressed the close link between terrorism and human rights and freedoms. Terrorism threatened democratic society, undermining the prevailing social order, destabilizing Governments and threatening human rights and freedoms. The rise of non-State terrorist entities with transnational reach was particularly worrying.

5. Bearing in mind that the victims of terrorism were innocent civilians, Turkey, together with a large number of sponsors, had decided once again to introduce a draft resolution on human rights and terrorism. The wording of the text, inspired by the previous General Assembly resolutions, expressed alarm that acts of terrorism aimed at the destruction of human rights had continued despite national and international efforts to combat the phenomenon. The international community should enhance cooperation in that regard, in accordance with the relevant international instruments, including those relating to human rights.

6. While the draft resolution did not seek to prejudice the right of peoples living under colonial or other forms of alien domination to take legitimate action to achieve their right to self-determination, it should not be construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity or political unity of sovereign and independent States. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would, as in previous years, be adopted without a vote.

Draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.72: Situation of human rights in Cambodia

7. **Ms. Ito** (Japan), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the original sponsors and Denmark, Germany, Italy, Norway and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, said that the text welcomed the efforts of the Cambodian Government to ensure the protection and promotion of human rights in Cambodia, including through the amendment of article 51 of the 1994 Law on Civil Servants. It also welcomed the five-year national plan against child sexual exploitation in Cambodia and encouraged the Government to take further measures to tackle the problem of child prostitution and trafficking.

8. In welcoming the agreement by the Government of Cambodia to extend the memorandum of understanding for the office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the draft resolution urged the Government to continue with the process of judicial reform with a view to addressing the issue of impunity. It called upon the Government to continue its efforts to ensure adequate health conditions for women and children and minority groups and to address the problem of HIV/AIDS. Additional efforts were needed to ensure the right of Cambodian children to education.

9. The draft resolution appealed to the Government of Cambodia to ensure that those most responsible for the most serious violations of human rights were brought to account.

The beginning of paragraph 5 had been revised to read "Commends the efforts by the Government of Cambodia for the review and the stated commitment to down-sizing of the police and the military,". Lastly, the participation of the Cambodian delegation in negotiations on the draft resolution had helped to deepen understanding between both sides. The sponsors hoped that the current draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

Draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.73: Strengthening United Nations activities in the field of human rights through the promotion of international cooperation and the importance of non-selectivity, impartiality and objectivity

10. **Mr. Amoros Nuñez** (Cuba) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the original sponsors and Benin.

Draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.74: Respect for the principles of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of States in their electoral processes

11. **Ms. de Armas García** (Cuba) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the original sponsors and Malaysia.

Draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.75: Respect for the right to universal freedom of travel and the vital importance of family reunification

12. **Ms. de Armas García** (Cuba) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the original sponsors and Antigua and Barbuda and Bolivia.

Draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.77: National institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights

13. **Mr. Bhattacharjee** (India), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the original sponsors and Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Denmark, Romania, Spain, Turkey and Venezuela, said that national institutions had emerged as innovative and effective agents for the promotion and protection of human rights in a growing number of countries. The nine preambular paragraphs of the draft resolution outlined some of the key elements that had shaped the evolution and increasing popularity of the idea of national institutions, highlighting their importance in promoting and protecting human rights at the national level, together with their links to other regional and international institutions.

14. The fifth preambular paragraph and paragraph 2 recalled and reaffirmed the importance of the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 48/134. The seventh preambular paragraph noted the diverse approaches adopted throughout the world for the protection and promotion of human rights at the national level, while paragraph 3 recognized the right of each State to choose the framework best suited to its particular needs at the national level in order to promote human rights in accordance with international human rights standards.

15. The sponsors noted with satisfaction the growing number of States establishing or considering the establishment of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights and welcomed the holding of regional meetings, forums and workshops bringing together national institutions to share information and experiences and to promote the concept in the regions concerned. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted, as in previous years, by consensus.

Draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.78: Human rights and mass exoduses

16. **Ms. Chatsis** (Canada), introducing the resolution on behalf of the original sponsors and Japan, Portugal, Thailand, and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, said that events over the last two years had underscored the importance of human rights before, during and after mass exoduses. Recalling that violations of human rights were the essential, but not the only, cause of mass exoduses, the draft resolution underlined the importance of respect for the rights of minorities and of adherence of international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law to protect refugees and internally displaced persons, especially during armed conflict. It was important to bear in mind measures that could be taken for the protection of civilians and humanitarian workers.

17. The inclusion of the reference to early-warning activities and other measures that could be taken to avert mass exoduses underlined the importance of an issue that required the Third Committee's continuing attention. Many actors were concerned with the various facets of the problems of mass exoduses. The draft resolution recognized the complementarity between human rights and refugee systems and the need for continued cooperation and coordination between them. The sponsors hoped that, as in previous years, the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

Draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.60: Human rights situation in Iraq

18. **Mr. Rytovuori** (Finland), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the European Union, the other original sponsors and Kuwait, New Zealand and Slovenia,

said that the text of the draft resolution was based on the conclusions of the report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Iraq (A/54/466), which showed that no improvements in the human rights situation in Iraq had been achieved.

19. The international community's repeated calls for the Government of Iraq to assure the Iraqi people their human rights and fundamental freedoms had gone unheeded. Systematic, widespread and extremely grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law continued in an atmosphere of all-pervasive oppression and repression. Summary and arbitrary executions, political killings, enforced disappearances, torture and routine failure to respect the due process of law deserved specific mention.

20. The sponsors called upon the Government of Iraq to abide by its human-rights obligations, ensuring respect for the human rights of all Iraqi citizens within its territory and subject to its jurisdiction, irrespective of their origin, ethnicity, gender or religion. They urged the Government to cooperate with the Tripartite Commission and the Technical Sub-Committee to establish the whereabouts and resolve the fate of several hundred missing persons, to release all individuals being held in detention, to respect the human rights and well-being of the Iraqi people. Concerned about the dire humanitarian situation in Iraq, the European Union urged all concerned to continue to cooperate in the implementation of Security Council resolution 986 (1995) concerning the oil-for-food programme. The failure of Iraq to cooperate with the Special Rapporteur was deplorable, and Iraq should take steps to remedy that situation forthwith. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

Draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.63: Situation of human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

21. **Ms. Liira** (Finland), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the European Union and all the other sponsors, said that the draft resolution welcomed the cooperation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in that country, together with the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement of July 1999. The sponsors supported the peace process and stood ready to assist with the timely and full implementation of the provisions of the Agreement throughout the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. All parties in that country, regardless of their provenance, should cease all military activity.

22. The draft resolution emphasized the need for the engagement of all Congolese in an all-inclusive process of political dialogue with a view to achieving national reconciliation and holding transparent, free and fair elections. It urged all parties to the conflict to bring an end to all human-rights violations and to ensure that there was no impunity for human-rights violators. The text also called upon the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to fulfil its responsibility to protect the human rights of the population on its territory and to seek to avert further flows of internally displaced persons.

23. The need for reform of the judicial system and in particular of military justice in conformity with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was stressed, as was the need to ensure respect for freedom of opinion and expression, and of association and assembly. Discussions with the Democratic Republic of the Congo on the text of the draft resolution were ongoing. The sponsors hoped that it would be adopted by consensus.

Draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.76: Situation of human rights in Myanmar

24. **Ms. Mårtensson** (Sweden), introducing the draft resolution on behalf of the original sponsors and Germany, New Zealand, Norway and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, said that the draft resolution reflected the human rights situation in Myanmar, taking into account events during the last year. The text deplored continuing violations of human rights in Myanmar, including extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, enforced disappearances, rape, torture, inhuman treatment and violations of the rights of women. Violations directed against persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities and actions which deprived such persons of all means of subsistence were also deplored.

25. The draft resolution welcomed the resumption of cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and encouraged continued cooperation. Expressing grave concern at the failure of the Government of Myanmar to review its legislation relating to the practice of forced labour, and at the escalation in the persecution of the democratic opposition, the draft resolution strongly urged the Government of Myanmar to restore democracy and to ensure full respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms, ending the impunity of human-rights violators, including members of the military.

26. The draft resolution urged the Government of Myanmar to cooperate fully with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, including through a field mission, and noted with interest the recent visit to Myanmar of the envoy of the Secretary-General for the purpose of discussions with the Government and with

various political leaders. The sponsors hoped that the draft resolution would be adopted without a vote.

Draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.80: Situation of human rights in Haiti

27. **Ms. Di Felice** (Venezuela) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the original sponsors and Andorra, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, El Salvador, Japan, Norway, Peru, Spain and Uruguay. The sponsors had revised the text in several places: in the fifth preambular paragraph, the words "in that country" had bene deleted; in the seventh preambular paragraph, the word "general" had been replaced by the words "legislative and local"; in paragraph 1, the words "in that country" had been deleted; in paragraph 8, the word "specific" had been inserted between the words "in this" and "context".

Draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.81: Situation of human rights in the Sudan

28. **Ms. Liira** (Finland) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the European Union, the other original sponsors and Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Monaco, Poland and Slovenia. The human rights situation in the Sudan was still cause for grave concern. The draft resolution expressed deep concern about the ongoing human rights violations there and called for a number of specific measures to be taken in order to put an end to them and establish the rule of law. Lastly, he pointed out that the consultations undertaken with the delegation of the Sudan concerning the text had been characterized by mutual respect, transparency and the declared intention of both sides to close the gaps between them.

Draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.61: Elimination of all forms of religious intolerance

29. **The Chairman** announced that the Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia and Madagascar had become sponsors of the draft resolution, which had no programme budget implications.

30. **Ms. Duffy** (Ireland) announced that Brazil, Georgia, the Philippines and Thailand had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

31. *Draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.61 was adopted.*

Agenda item 107: Crime prevention and criminal justice (*continued*) (A/C.3/54/L.21/Rev.1, L.23 and L.88*)

Draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.21/Rev.1: High-level Political Signing Conference for the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime

32. **Mr. Gallagher** (United States of America) introduced the draft resolution on behalf of the original sponsors and Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Armenia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Brunei Darussalam, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Comoros, Congo, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Haiti, Hungary, Indonesia, Ireland, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Maldives, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Netherlands, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Palau, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Philippines, Qatar, Romania, the Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Samoa, San Marino, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, the Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, the Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela, Yemen, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The sponsors wished to make a number of revisions: in the first preambular paragraph, the word "of" should be inserted between the words "and" and "discussing" and the phrase "illegal trafficking in and transporting" should be replaced by the word "smuggling"; in the fifth preambular paragraph, both occurrences of the word "draft" should be deleted; in the fourth preambular paragraph, the words "draft" and "the draft" should be deleted; in paragraph 1, both occurrences of the word "draft" should be deleted and the phrase "(Palermo Convention)"should be inserted after the word "Crime"; in paragraph 2, the words "the High-level" should be replaced by the words "this High-level" and the phrase "for the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime" should be deleted; in paragraph 4, the word "and" should be inserted between the words "for" and "the" in the third line, and the words "draft" and "the draft" in the fourth line should be deleted.

33. **Mr. Ogonowski** (Poland) recalled that his delegation had described to the Committee, at its fifteenth meeting, the reasons which had led it to put forward draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.23. Since draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.21/Rev.1, on the same topic, emphasized the need for the early adoption of the Convention and reflected the developments

which had led to the current stage of preparations for that, he withdrew draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.23.

34. *Draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.23 was withdrawn.*

35. **Mr. Fulci** (Italy) thanked the representative of Poland for withdrawing, in a spirit of friendship and mutual understanding, his delegation's draft resolution. It was rare for a draft resolution to have over 150 sponsors, as draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.21/Rev.1 did; his delegation was deeply grateful to all of them for their support. The adoption of the draft resolution would make Palermo even more than at present a symbol of the fight against organized crime.

Draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.88 and L.88: Draft United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the draft protocols thereto*

36. **Mr. Gallagher** (United States of America) recalled that draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.88 amended the draft resolution contained in document A/C.3/54/L.4 and had itself been amended as indicated in document A/C.3/54/L.88*. In order to ensure consistency with draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.21/Rev.1, both occurrences of the word "draft" should be deleted from the text proposed for paragraph 10 in document A/C.3/54/L.88*.

Agenda item 114: Elimination of racism and racial discrimination (*continued*) (A/C.3/54/L.28/Rev.1)

Draft resolution A/C.3/L.28/Rev.1: Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and the convening of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance

37. **Ms. Newell** (Secretary of the Committee) reported on the programme budget implications of the draft resolution as identified by the Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division. With regard to the requests made in paragraphs 28, 29 and 32 of the draft resolution, the Director had said that resources, including one additional P-4 post, for the preparation, servicing and follow-up to the World Conference had been included under Section 22, Human Rights, Section 2, General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services, and Section 26, Public Information, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001. Regarding in particular the provision of assistance for national and regional preparatory meetings, he had recalled that the Commission on Human Rights had been informed, at its fifty-fifth session, that assistance for the organization of regional preparatory meetings would be funded from extrabudgetary resources. He had further recalled that, pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution E/1999/12, a voluntary fund would be set up to receive contributions from Governments, international and non-governmental organizations and private individuals. The voluntary contributions would cover all aspects of the preparatory process for the World Conference and the participation of non-governmental organizations, especially from developing countries.

38. Concerning the requests made of the Secretary-General in paragraphs 20 and 26, the Director had referred to the increasing tendency for resolutions and decisions of the Third Committee and of the Economic and Social Council and its functional commissions to deal with administrative and budgetary matters. He had drawn attention in that context to General Assembly resolution 45/248 B, section VI, and to the readiness of the Controller and his staff to provide the Committee with all relevant information concerning the procedures mentioned therein.

39. **Ms. Elliott** (Guyana) announced that Afghanistan, Austria, Canada, Iceland, Israel, Sweden and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia had also become sponsors of the draft resolution.

40. **Mr. Gallagher** (United States of America) said that his country was very much in favour of the aims of the Third Decade to Combat Racism and looked forward to a World Conference that would be constructive and would not be sidetracked by the recounting of historical grievances or animosities. Nevertheless, as the United States Constitution, like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, upheld the right of free speech, his delegation could not support moves to ban the use of technology such as the Internet for disseminating opinions. Consequently, it could not support the draft resolution. The Committee could be assured, however, that the United States of America had laws banning racism and racial discrimination that were both effective and fully in accordance with the fundamental principles of human rights.

41. *Draft resolution A/C.3/L.28/Rev.1 was adopted.*

Agenda item 115: Right of peoples to self-determination (*continued*) (A/C.3/54/L.27 and L.90)

Draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.27: Use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination

42. **The Chairman** said that the programme budget implications of the draft resolution were contained in document A/C.3/54/L.90. Madagascar and Suriname had become sponsors of the draft resolution.

43. **Ms. de Armas García** (Cuba) announced that Bolivia and Togo had also become sponsors of the draft resolution.

44. **The Chairman** announced that a recorded vote had been requested on the draft resolution.

45. **Mr. Rytovuori** (Finland), speaking on behalf of the European Union, and Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland and of the associated countries, Malta and Iceland, said that the States that he represented shared many of the concerns expressed by the Special Rapporteur on the use of mercenaries, including those on the duration and nature of armed conflicts, and that they firmly condemned the use of mercenaries. They were, however, unable to support the draft resolution: regrettably, there had been no consultations at which they could have aired their reservations concerning it. They believed that questions relating to the use of mercenaries should be discussed in the Sixth, not the Third, Committee. In that connection, they wished to place on record their intention to continue to participate actively and in the appropriate places in efforts to halt the use of mercenaries.

46. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Japan, Luxembourg, Micronesia (Federated States of), Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Andorra, Australia, Austria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malta, Marshall Islands, Monaco, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine.

47. *Draft resolution A/C.3/54/L.27 was adopted by 103 votes to 16, with 32 abstentions.*

48. **Ms. de Armas García** (Cuba) stressed that the right of peoples to self-determination was a matter for consideration by the Third Committee and that the draft resolution just adopted was, therefore, relevant to the Committee's work. She hoped that adequate resources would be forthcoming for its full implementation.

Agenda item 111: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, questions relating to refugees, returnees and displaced persons and humanitarian questions (*continued*) (A/54/12 and Add.1, A/54/91, 98, 99, 285, 286, 414 and 469)

49. **Mr. Ragab** (Egypt) said that the report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (A/54/12 and Add.1) highlighted the scale of the challenges facing the international community in its efforts to protect refugees and facilitate their voluntary repatriation. There were many obstacles preventing just and lasting solutions to the world's growing refugee problems, problems that threatened peace and security in various parts of the world. The international community should continue to be guided by the humanitarian values that inspired the relevant international instruments, eschewing discrimination between one refugee situation and another.

50. It was important to adhere to the principle of the voluntary return of refugees and displaced persons and to ensure that those responsible for human-rights violations against such persons were brought to justice. The situation of refugees, returnees and displaced persons in Africa and the Middle East were the focus of many of the efforts of the international community, regional and international organizations and international aid agencies. The United Nations should continue to accord priority importance to the return of refugees, including Palestinian refugees, ensuring guarantees for their safety and compensation for any

property that they had lost as a result of their expulsion, displacement or the occupation of their homeland.

51. The resources provided to receiving countries in Africa were inadequate to meet their needs. Refugees represented a huge additional drain on the already limited resources of developing countries. The imbalance in the international allocation of resources and assistance only exacerbated the difficulties. The development process was hampered and ethnic tensions worsened, threatening stability and security, particularly in Africa.

52. The international community should do more to share the burden and to increase its contributions to receiving countries, particularly in Africa, redoubling its efforts to avert their decline and to offset the negative economic, social, environmental and health effects induced by the presence of refugees. Lastly, humanitarian workers should be afforded complete protection and unimpeded access to refugees.

53. **Mrs. Nicodemos** (Brazil) said that the provision of assistance to refugees was proving increasingly difficult. In internal conflicts, the difference between combatants and civilians was being increasingly blurred and assistance was often diverted by belligerents for strategic ends. Moreover, resources were insufficient to address the magnitude of the problem of refugees and internally displaced persons. In Africa in particular, entire countries plagued by humanitarian crises did not receive sufficient attention from the international community.

54. Member States must provide the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) with the support it needed and thereby avoid the pursuit of vested interests in rendering assistance. The international community must further uphold its commitments to the principle of non-refoulement and to the institution of asylum. Moreover, the refugee problem must be tackled in an urgent, systematic and coordinated manner.

55. Brazil, for its part, had been a longstanding host to refugees, around 80 per cent of whom were from Africa. The Brazilian Government had expanded the interpretation of relevant international instruments to cover the protection of all individuals fleeing from situations of open violence and serious violations of human rights and had facilitated the access of refugees to employment, social security and health. Although national mechanisms had been improved and partnerships with civil society strengthened, cooperation with UNHCR, however, remained vital.

56. **Mr. Vienravi** (Thailand) said that experience had shown that a permanent solution to the refugee problem depended on partnerships at all levels, which must involve host countries, countries of origin, as well as refugees and displaced persons themselves. Moreover, it was essential to bridge the gaps between relief assistance on the one hand and sustainable reintegration and development on the other. To that end, it was important to foster an enabling environment for democracy, human rights, peace and development in the country of origin. Developing States — which bore the brunt of long-term refugee situations — needed practical support and encouragement, not criticism. Refugee problems were the responsibility not merely of the host State, but of the international community as a whole, hence the importance of resettlement schemes to third countries.

57. Thailand was host to more than 100,000 displaced persons from Myanmar and had accorded UNHCR free and early access to all temporary shelter areas. UNHCR also participated in the admission and registration of displaced persons. His delegation was pleased to announce that Cambodian refugees who had fled their country in 1997 had finally been able to return home. UNHCR, in cooperation with his Government and the Lao People's Democratic Republic, was also arranging the return of more than 1,000 of the remaining Laotian refugees who had taken refuge in Thailand since the 1970s.

58. It was to be hoped that the presence of UNHCR within Myanmar would be enhanced and that other specialized agencies — including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) — would play a more constructive role in addressing Myanmar's development needs. The Thai Government was willing to cooperate in that regard. With a "culture of prevention" and a more pro-active United Nations system, it was hoped that fewer lives would be lost and fewer people forced to leave their homes and loved ones.

59. **Ms. Kapalata** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that refugee movements had become a major source of instability and conflict. For more than forty years, her Government had hosted refugees out of humanitarian concern, and in accordance with its international obligations. Since the country enjoyed peace, it had become a refuge for refugees from neighbouring countries. Thus far, Tanzania had never refused asylum or sought to impose quotas. However, the refugee burden had assumed inordinate proportions and the Government was increasingly concerned at the attendant economic pressures. Her delegation thus wished to reiterate its call to the international community to devote as much enthusiasm to burden-sharing as it did to State responsibility for hosting refugees. In the absence of adequate financial resources, developing States which were hosting refugees could not expect to meet their international obligations.

60. According to the Tanzanian Government's records, her country was host to some 800,000 refugees. However,

according to UNHCR, it had only 300,000 to 500,000 refugees. UNHCR's statistics should thus be re-evaluated to take account of refugees residing outside refugee camps, and to ensure that the assistance provided to the country was commensurate with the actual burden being shouldered. Her Government was grateful for international assistance for enhancing security in refugee camps. Such assistance was particularly important in view of dwindling national resources. Also on the issue of security, her delegation wished to stress the obligation of refugees to conduct themselves in a manner consistent with their status. It was irrational and unfair for them to expect hospitality from a host Government if they violated domestic law.

61. The Kosovo crisis had revealed the application of double standards in the international response to humanitarian emergencies. While there had been a massive outpouring of assistance to refugees in Europe, assistance to Africa had been at best inadequate. Such an imbalance was also evident within UNHCR itself and must be redressed. Voluntary repatriation — as opposed to integration — furthered national reconciliation and reconstruction and should be the cornerstone of a durable solution to the refugee problem. Moreover, a sustainable return depended on peace in the country of origin, which in turn depended on economic stability and respect for human rights.

62. **Ms. Dukuly-Tolbert** (Liberia) expressed concern that, of the world's 21 million refugees, as many as six million were in Africa. Hundreds of thousands lived in refugee camps after fleeing violence and political instability in their countries of origin. The High Commissioner's visit to Liberia in February 1999 had been most fruitful, and her participation in the thirty-fifth Summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Algiers had provided assurance of UNHCR's continuing assistance.

63. Liberia had opened its doors to some 90,000 Sierra Leonean refugees in a spirit of African brotherhood, even though its own economy had not recovered from civil war. Her Government thus called upon the international community to provide support for its relief assistance efforts. Liberia, in turn, was grateful to its neighbours for providing refuge to hundreds of thousands of Liberians who had fled during its civil war. Thus far, 120,000 Liberian refugees had been repatriated with assistance from UNHCR; it was estimated that 210,000 remained in Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire. The Government had appealed for their return and was currently fostering an enabling environment for their reintegration.

64. Recent armed incursions into Liberia through Lofa County had sadly necessitated a temporary halt to repatriation, which her Government nonetheless hoped would be completed by the target date set by UNHCR. The incursions had also necessitated the relocation of some 5,000 Sierra Leonean refugees to a safer area. Her Government wished to express its gratitude to UNHCR and hoped that the international community would provide assistance to Liberia for post-war recovery and development.

65. **Mr. Moniaga** (Indonesia) reiterated his Government's commitment to providing support for refugees and internally displaced persons and stressed the importance that it attached to the principle of international protection. Indonesia's participation in a regional plan of action on refugees and its assistance to East Timorese refugees and displaced persons clearly demonstrated a deep respect for the right of asylum. The deplorable violence which had precipitated the refugee crisis, and destruction throughout East Timor had been a setback to development. As a country of first asylum, Indonesia faced new challenges, but his Government aspired to fulfil its commitments to the extent possible. A number of measures had been adopted to alleviate the situation, including the provision of supplies and shelter, cooperation with international humanitarian relief agencies and non-governmental organizations, and the signing of a memorandum of understanding on repatriation.

66. He welcomed the concern expressed by the High Commissioner about the plight of refugees in West Timor and stressed the importance of relief to development and the need for the international community to address current humanitarian issues, bearing in mind the development needs of the future. The path to peace, stability and prosperity in East Timor lay in genuine reconciliation among the various local political groups. Indonesia looked forward to close bilateral relations with the newly independent East Timor and to further cooperation with UNHCR, UNDP and other agencies and non-governmental organizations working to secure the well-being of all refugees.

67. **Ms. Getachew** (Ethiopia) said that there was growing concern about the decline in international assistance to refugees in Africa and that the Governments of African countries of asylum hoped for an overall increase in resources allocated for such assistance. A viable solution to the refugee problem was inconceivable without voluntary repatriation, which, in turn, required reintegration and development assistance. The challenges of reintegration would be more fully met if agencies such as UNDP, UNICEF and the World Bank shared the burden with UNHCR to bridge the gap between humanitarian and development assistance.

68. At the regional level, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and UNHCR had organized forums in search

of lasting solutions to the refugee crisis in Africa. However, a number of issues remained to be considered: the causes of refugee flows, promotion of refugee protection, extension of assistance to areas affected by refugee flows, and the identification and promotion of lasting solutions to outstanding refugee problems, such as voluntary repatriation, sustainable reintegration and post-conflict recovery and rehabilitation. Ethiopia had provided asylum protection and assistance to a large number of refugees from neighbouring countries. In consultation with UNHCR, the Government had successfully repatriated 60,000 refugees to Somalia since the middle of 1997, with an additional 25,000 expected to return to their homeland by the end of 1999. A similar outcome was expected in the case of the remaining refugees from the Sudan, Kenya and Djibouti.

69. The reign of peace and stability in Ethiopia since 1991 had led to the repatriation of nearly 1.1 million Ethiopians. That encouraging trend required adequate financial and material assistance as well as the political and moral support of the international community. She urged United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and donor countries to join in Ethiopia's repatriation effort aimed at the reintegration and rehabilitation of returnees. In addition to the burden of hosting a large number of refugees and the serious challenge of integrating its own returnees, the Ethiopian Government faced the colossal task of sustaining approximately 400,000 internally displaced persons. She therefore took the opportunity to appeal to the United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and bilateral donors to continue and increase their assistance until the problem was resolved.

70. **Mr. Zoumanigui** (Guinea) said that, in spite of the relative stability in the numbers of refugees and displaced persons, the decision to cancel or reduce certain programmes should be reconsidered. Guinea encouraged the strengthening of institutional cooperation and, to that end, hoped that a representative would be appointed to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Guinea, where refugees represented 10 per cent of the country's population. His Government had made a tremendous effort to overcome the negative social, cultural, security and environmental consequences of hosting large numbers of refugees. He took the opportunity to thank the international community for its assistance and expressed appreciation to the United Nations and UNDP for facilitating consultation at the country level. He also hoped that the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) would consider Guinea's candidacy for the UNHCR Executive Committee in 2000.

71. Guinea had actively participated in regional attempts to seek constructive solutions to conflicts and to peacemaking in behalf of the people of the subregion. The objective identification of the causes of conflict and their peaceful settlement were crucial to solving the refugee crisis in Africa. In the quest for development, prosperity and security, the international community should not confine its efforts to humanitarian action. It should also embrace activities aimed at prevention and peace-building. Guinea reaffirmed its commitment to eliminating the causes of conflict and destabilization and looked forward to the continued cooperation of the international community.

72. **Mr. Dae-won Suh** (Republic of Korea), while noting that several of the world's acute refugee crises had been successfully managed during the previous year, said that enormous challenges remained. In some parts of the world, ethnic, religious and political conflicts had led to the systematic violation of human rights, blatant disregard for humanitarian law and ethnic cleansing. The concept of refugee protection was inseparable from more general notions of human rights. Also of great concern to the international community was the security of humanitarian workers.

73. Since its admission to the United Nations, the Republic of Korea had consistently joined the international community in providing humanitarian assistance for refugees. Furthermore, during its presidency of the Security Council in 1998, his Government had initiated a debate leading to the adoption of two presidential statements which were instrumental in placing humanitarian assistance issues at the top of the international agenda. It was in that context of involvement that Korea was seeking membership in the Executive Committee of UNHCR, and he expressed the hope that the General Assembly would take positive action on the draft resolution to endorse the Economic and Social Council's decision.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.